



## The Bible our Guide

READINGS FOR THIS LESSON – Psalm 1, 19 and 119:81-112.

### The need for a guide



When we are visiting a place we have never been to before, we need some sort of guide. It may be we buy a map, or a guidebook. It may be we ask a friend who has first-hand knowledge of the way – but we must have a guide.

So, as we travel through life, we need a guide. We need to know what is the purpose of life, and how we should live day by day. The Bible claims to have the answer to these questions.

When we consider the wonders of the world around us, and the marvellous way in which our own bodies are made, we feel sure that a great Creator must have been at work. But how can we know more about Him, and find out what He wants us to do?

The answer, of course, is in the Bible. God, the great maker of all things, has given us the guidebook that we need. If we would please Him, we must take that guidebook, and read it, and study it, and think about it day by day.

### The Bible's claims

The Bible makes great claims. It speaks with authority, claiming to be the Word of God. Many times the prophets of the Old Testament begin their message with the words, *"This is what the LORD says.."*. The apostle Paul tells us that *"All Scripture is God-breathed"* (2 Timothy 3:16).

If these claims were not true, and the Bible was not the Word of God, we could put it on the shelf and forget it.

However, since the Bible IS true, we dare not ignore it – unless we want to ignore God, and cut ourselves off from the offer of life, which He has made!

### How do we know that the Bible is true?

What reasons are there for believing the Bible to be true? There are so many reasons that we cannot give them all here, but will mention a few of them.

Firstly, we have the Lord Jesus Christ's word for it. In his days, only the Old Testament had been written – and *Jesus believed every word of it*. Whenever he was challenged over anything that he had said or done, he would support his words and actions by referring back to the Old Testament.

In Matthew 22:34-46, when the Pharisees came to him, trying to trick him, with a question as to which was the greatest commandment, he quoted the words of Deuteronomy 6:5,

*"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."*



and Leviticus 19:18.

*"love your neighbor as yourself."*

He then asked the Pharisees what they thought of other passages in the Old Testament.

Jesus speaks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Luke 13:28); of Moses (John 6:32); of David (Luke 20:41-44); and Solomon (Mathew 6:29); as well as many other people about whom we read in the Old Testament. From the way in which he speaks of them, we know that he believed the Old Testament stories about these people.

Then there is the fact that no one has ever proved the Bible false. Many enemies of the Bible, including some very clever men, have tried to do this, but they have all failed. If we stop to think about this, we have to admit that it is an amazing thing.

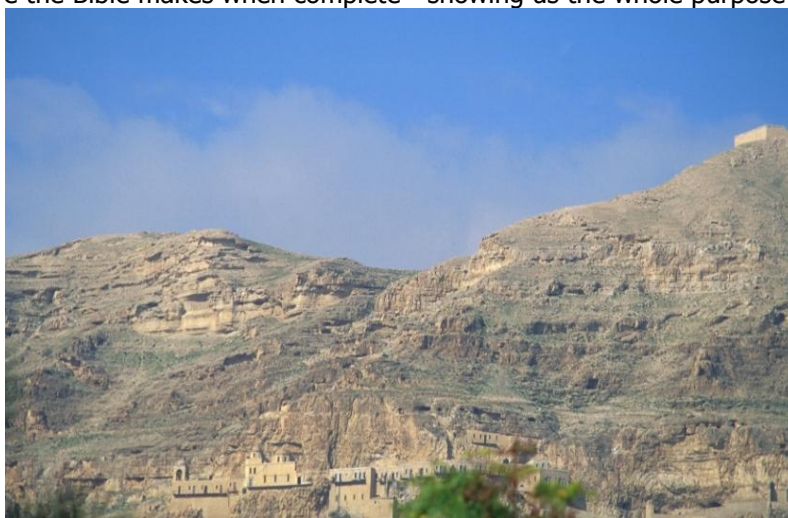
Then again, there is the wonderful fulfilment of prophecies. The Bible speaks, from time to time, of events that were to come to pass hundreds of years later. In Matthew 2:1-2, for example, we read that the wise men came to Herod the king to ask, *"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?"* Now Herod asked the chief priests this question, and they at once replied, *"In Bethlehem in Judea"*, (Matthew 2:4). How did they know? Because, hundreds of years before, it had been prophesied in one of the books of the Old Testament – Micah 5:2.



*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."*

The history of the Bible, written so long ago, has been proved true again and again by modern discoveries.

Discoveries in Israel and surrounding countries of such ancient towns as Jericho, Capernaum, Old Jerusalem and Babylon have proved that they really existed, just as the Bible had recorded thousands of years ago! So we could go on finding more proofs, but the best way is to read the Bible for ourselves. We will come to see what a perfect picture the Bible makes when complete - showing us the whole purpose of God.



Jericho

## The contents of the Bible

The Bible is not really one book, but a collection of books – 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New, - making 66 in all. They were written by many different authors over a period of 1,600 years, yet all combine to give us one complete story. It tells the story of the working out of God's purpose with humanity, from its very beginnings as recorded in Genesis, right up to the time when *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* (Revelation 11:15).

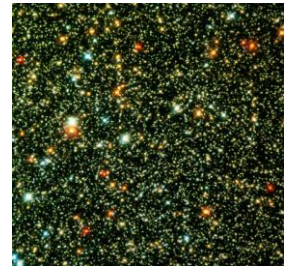
## The Old Testament

The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses, who is known as God's servant in Numbers 12:6-7. The first book is called Genesis, which means *"beginnings"*. It tells us about God's involvement with the first people on this earth.

Then follows Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These four books tell us how God brought the Jews (called the children of Israel), whom He had chosen to be His people, out of Egypt, and gave them the land of Canaan (Israel). Then follows a number of books telling the history of this people, and God's involvement with them.

When we come to the book of Psalms, we find some of the finest poems that have ever been written. Bible poems speak of feelings we all sometimes have; yet we cannot put them into words. For example, read these verses from Psalm 8:3-4.

*"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?"*



Haven't you ever felt like that when you have looked up at the stars at night?

Following this we have the books of the prophets – the long prophetic writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, followed by many shorter prophecies.

## The New Testament

This begins with four separate stories of the life of Christ, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – each one telling the story in his own way.

Then follows the story of what happened after Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Here we read about the first churches that were formed, in a book called "The Acts of the Apostles".

We have then a number of letters written by various apostles to help these young churches and, finally, the Bible concludes with the Book of Revelation.

## Note

If you would like fuller proof of the reliability of the Bible, write and tell us, and we can send you the free booklet called "This Remarkable Book called The Bible."

## **Summary**

1. The Bible is God's Word and can guide us through life.
2. It has been proved true by prophecy being fulfilled.
3. It contains 66 books – 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament, and was written over a period of 1,600 years.